

## Letters

### Prejudging the C.I.A.

To the Editor:

In composing its March 12 editorial "Son of Operation Chaos," The Times appears to have had a vested interest in supporting its December 1974 trumpeting that C.I.A. engaged in a "massive domestic intelligence operation," which turned out not to be so massive after all.

One would have hoped that The Times would have reflected the conclusions of the investigations that followed that charge, rather than saying that the C.I.A. in the past "thought nothing of opening the mail of innocent citizens, illegally searching homes and infiltrating political organizations."

The record of the investigations showed, on the contrary, that the C.I.A.'s steps over proper lines were few and far between, undertaken only after considerable soul-searching.

The letter openings, for example, were essentially limited to mail between the Soviet Union and the United States, in search of leads to Soviet agents in this country. The improper entries involved investigations of C.I.A. employees and ex-employees reportedly involved with foreign intelligence agents. A total of three C.I.A. agents reported on American organizations which they joined to go abroad to determine whether secret foreign assistance was coming to them, a question the C.I.A. answered in the negative.

The editorial also stated that

"Presidents finally cracked down on these abuses," although the record is clear that the C.I.A. itself terminated them before they were questioned by outsiders.

The most exasperating part of The Times's effort to produce a "Son of Rogue Elephant" scenario is its seizing upon a preliminary draft by a subordinate official, before responsible authorities reviewed it, and resting its editorial upon its provisions. This is as though a first draft of one of your journalists' copy was used as a judgment of the good sense and integrity of The Times before your editor had had a chance to review it.

The C.I.A. certainly should operate under clear rules that will fully guarantee the constitutional rights of our citizens. But equally, The Times should forswear the kind of hysterical Chicken Little exaggerations which, rather than regulatory directives, were the real sources of the serious wounds our intelligence services suffered these past five years.

Let's give President Reagan and the fine new leadership he has appointed to C.I.A. a chance to apply the Rockefeller Commission's conclusions as they revive our intelligence services and judge them on what they do, not what some subordinate suggests they might do.

W. E. COLBY

Washington, March 13, 1981

*The writer was Director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 1973 to 1976.*

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# PARADE'S SPECIAL Intelligence Report

BECAUSE OF VOLUME OF MAIL RECEIVED, PARADE REGRETS IT CANNOT ANSWER QUERIES.

by LLOYD SHEARER ©1981

## Who Goofed? Now that

our 52 hostages have been home nearly two months, Congressional committees will surely be asking some key questions about U.S.-Iran relations. For starters, here are two.

Question No. 1: Why did Jimmy Carter succumb to the appeals of Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller and permit the late Shah to enter this country on Oct. 22, 1979—especially when he had previously been cautioned not to do so by Charge d'Affaires Bruce Laingen, our man on-the-spot in Tehran?

"We should not take any steps in the direction of admitting the Shah until such time as we have been able to prepare an effective and essential force for the protection of the embassy," Laingen reported. "We have the impression that the threat to U.S. personnel is less now than it was in the spring... Nevertheless, the danger of hostages being taken in Iran will persist."

Did Jimmy Carter goof when his humanitarian considerations for the medical care of the Shah overruled his humanitari-

an considerations for the safety of our embassy staff in Tehran?

Question No. 2: Who during the Nixon-Kissinger and Ford-Kissinger Administrations was responsible for the inexcusable intelligence failure to discover the Shah's cancer? In retrospect, that may have been the single most glaring sin of omission in the entire tragedy.

Under four different directors—Richard Helms, James Schlesinger, William Colby and Stansfield Turner—our CIA was unable to learn or detect the truth about the Shah's health.

In 1972, when this reporter was in Tehran with Nixon and Kissinger, the rumor of the Shah's malady was rife. A year later, Cynthia Helms, wife of then-U.S. Ambassador to Iran Richard Helms, heard the gossip: "I remember it well, but none of us could verify it. I saw the Shah on numerous occasions. To my eyes, he looked well and fit, and he kept denying the rumors of his illness. It's incredible that our government couldn't learn the truth."

As far back as 1973, French doctors diagnosed the Shah's illness as a form of blood cancer and began to treat him. The French intelligence service is notorious for wiretapping, and it is difficult to believe that if Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon—men also not averse to the use of wiretaps—had seriously wanted a valid report on the state of the Shah's health, they could not have obtained it.

For years we backed a Shah who knew he was terminally ill but refused to tell us.

At this stage of the game, the American public is entitled to learn the truth about the American experience in Iran. Hopefully, a Congressional committee will supply it.